

**Dickinson County Conservation Board meeting minutes**

**2279 170<sup>th</sup> St., Okoboji**

**7 p.m. Dec. 8, 2015**

**Chair: Willia Mueske**

**Vice chair: Kathy Kleen**

**Board members: Steve Anderson**

**Employees: Lee Sorenson, Kiley Roth**

**Board liaison: Pam Jordan**

**Board members absent: Eric Stoll, Joan Gronstal**

**Call to order 6:59 p.m.**

**Agenda approval:** Kleen motion, Anderson second. Approved.

**Approval of past month's minutes:** Kleen motion, Anderson second. Approved.

**Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County update:** Meeting is not held until Monday, Dec. 14, the second Monday of the month. It will include a potluck meal.

**Environmental education update:** A year-long report was submitted with program numbers as well as the December program report. More than 9,000 people were reached by programming in 2015. The Native Thanksgiving Hike was successful with about 30 participants attending.

**Operations and facility update:**

**Recycling center:** Brush is to be chipped and is anticipated to cost about \$1,200. Hazardous materials were recycled and a bill will most likely come in next month. Demanufactured appliances will be recycled this winter as well. The new secretary has begun her duties.

Bids are being received from contractors regarding installing a bathroom at the recycling center. The road will also be expanded leading to the green waste site.

**Iowa Department of Transportation drill approval:** Anderson motion to sign the approval to purchase the truax seed drill, Kleen second. Approved. Mueske signed the agreement.

**Iowa Department of Ag & Land Stewardship incentives:** Watershed coordinator Jim Sholly set up a cost-share initiative to help plant native grasses in Kenue Park's disc golf course, and the conservation board cost share will be \$3,000 of the \$12,000 project. Anderson motion to approve the cost-share application, Kleen second. Approved.

**Staffing update:** More than 70 resumes have been turned in after the search was broadened to neighboring states. The post will be pulled down by Jan. 1 and a naturalist will be selected from that existing pool.

**IRVM meeting with Dickinson County engineer:** Jordan, Sorenson, IRVM vegetation specialist Aric Ping and county engineer Dan Eckert met to discuss roles. Eckert will continue spraying through 2017, and then the conservation board will continue contract spraying. Ditch cleanouts were discussed with a request to alert Ping after cleanouts so he can seed. The engineer said a drainage problem usually causes ditch cleaning.

The engineer plans to gravel the Little Sioux Savanna entrance in the spring.

#### **Dickinson County Conservation Board areas**

**Horseshoe Bend east bridge:** Calhoun & Burns submitted a request to the Corps of Engineers to begin the process to repair the bridge. Sorenson wrote a letter to the Williams family about their donation to repair the west bridge and what they would like done with those funds now that the west bridge was deemed irreparable.

**Knudtson property:** A Fish Habitat Grant was submitted to attempt to receive funds to acquire the property south of Milford, and the grant funds will be scored Dec. 9.

**Budget discussion:** Sorenson met with Jordan and Mardi Allen about the possibility of building a new \$230,000 shop at Horseshoe Bend Wildlife Area in Milford. Sorenson thinks he could ask for the planning money fiscal year 2017 and the construction financing the following year.

Ping and his staff's wages will be moved to the rural basic fund, and adding a part-time person to the IRVM program was also discussed.

**Approval of expenses:** Kleen motion, Anderson second. Approved.

#### **General discussion**

Ping asked about the possibility of school stipends since he is pursuing a master's degree, but he will be recommended to talk to the Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County. If the board did provide such funding for employees, board members would like to see a contract for a term of service. The board would be more willing to help fund continuing education credits rather than to pursue a degree.

Local conservation professionals discussed the possibility of purchasing the Orr property along Upper Gar Lake since the price of the property has dropped to \$4 million from \$6 million. The discussion also future management of the property if it was purchased.

The Prairie Lakes Conference is scheduled for Aug. 11-12, 2016, in conjunction with the Clean Water Concert.

**Motion to adjourn by Kleen, Anderson second. Adjourn at 9:03 p.m.**